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## **Kansas Health Policy Authority looking to the future for health reform**

*The following is a statement from Marci Nielsen, PhD, MPH, Executive Director of the Kansas Health Policy Authority, in response to Senator Jim Barnett's health care plan announced today:*

"Currently, 11% of Kansans are uninsured and without health care coverage. While we've made great strides in recent years to increase enrollment in Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program and launching programs like HealthyKids, we can do better.

"Health reform requires making health and health care services accessible and engaging in effective outreach efforts that seek and invite Kansans to participate and lead healthy lifestyles through preventive care and newborn screening. The Board has embraced these ideas as vision principles and reflected in the budget recommendations and policy initiatives the Health Policy Authority advanced this year. We need these important elements in any health care reform plan, and I am pleased that Senator Barnett clearly shares that belief.

"Having a plan and the political will to implement the plan will be key. That is why we will begin this dialogue of increasing health access and outreach efforts at the first meeting of the Health for All Kansans Steering Committee tomorrow. We are looking forward to discussing these ideas and have a health reform plan ready for the 2008 Legislature to consider."

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